between the 9th and 10 sessions

A LETTER

FROM

THE LAY BISHOP

TO

THE LORD BISHOP.

My Lord Bishop,—In accordance with my long assumed prerogative to dictate in matters relating to the Church in this Diocese, I had a right to conclude that no measure of importance would be introduced into the Synod without my having given my approval, as the acknowledged head of the faithful Laity.

Imagine, then, my consternation when the proposed Canon on the appointment of a Bishop Coadjutor was brought to my notice.

For my own part, it reached me at a time when, although I may possibly have misapprehended its meaning, I had at least ample opportunity of considering its plain provisions, which are clearly stated and easily understood. Yet it seems to me fraught with serious danger to my leadership and prestige, and I cannot consent that a measure, no matter how good in itself or how necessary to the best interests of the Church, should be placed before the Synod thus independently and rashly.

Consider at how great exertion my position as Lay Bishop has been attained. What self-sacrifice, what forethought, what planning, what perseverance. I have pushed myself forward at judicious times, and for popular objects. I have influenced well-meaning and impressionable men, both of the Clergy and Laity, to put me in nomination for important offices. At meetings of Synod and Church Society, I have preserved for many years a prominent place. My name appears on numerous committees for various purposes. Life membership in the Church Society I gained by subscription; but representation in the Synod was not so easily obtained. I changed from Parish to Parish, carefully and warily, until at last I have secured a place from which I can always command votes as representative at Synod.

Pardon me if I speak too plainly. No one shall yield to me, (I have read this expression lately, and I adopt it here, as it appears to have a reversible meaning). "No one shall yield to me" in respect for Your Lordship — next to myself. When the question arose as to the Bishop's negative vote or veto, I withdrew opposition at the proper moment to avoid defeat, for I like to be on the winning side; and, therefore, when I found that the Synod would carry the veto, I yielded "for conscience sake," and voted with the majority. I stood by Your Lordship in the result on that occasion; so now I ask with confidence that you will withdraw or postpone the proposed Canon either for a year or to a special session, and I will then introduce it and carry it in Synod. If it is passed now, without my having had anything to do with framing it, my authority as Lay Bishop will be compromised. Is it right that such a sword of Damocles should hang over me?

My Lord Bishop, trust me, and give me time to introduce this Canon myself at another session, and all will go well. I know you have the right of veto over any nomination of the Synod, and I will urge the adoption of the Canon to give nomination in this case of Bishop Coadjutor as preferable to the exercise of veto. What have I done that Your Lordship should not consent to this delay, to keep me in the front rank!

I shrink from the responsibility which the publication of this letter entails. I know that it is ordinarily considered an unpardonable imperti-

nence to address any person as if in private communication, and, withou asking permission, publish for general information; but the emergency must plead my excuse.

The loss of my influence as "Lay Bishop" would, I believe, involve the possibility of serious hazard to the Church.

I am, my Lord Bishop,

Your Lordship's most obedient servant,

WHIL-LIUM ST. JOHN,
Lay Bishop.